

REMARKS

Claims 1-7, 10, 12-18, and 21-22 are pending in the present application after amendments. Claims 1 has been amended to distinctively claim the invention. Claims 8-9, 11 and 19-20 have been cancelled without prejudice. The amendment is supported by the originally filed claims and descriptions. No new matter has been introduced.

Information Disclosure Statement

The information disclosure statement filed 5/20/08 cited one US patent document (US 2,836,840) and two foreign patent documents (DE910515 and BE542335). The US patent document to Pratt (US 2,836,840) has been considered and, accordingly has been initialled on the IDS. Below, the concise explanation of the relevance of the cited foreign patent documents is presented, in order to comply with 337 CFR 1.98(a)(2 and 3).

Figure 1 of DE910515 discloses a paint roller having an inverted V-shaped surface. In addition, both sides of the roller are of the same diameter. It also appears that there is a stem in the centre of the roller with both ends of the

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stem connected to a handle. The features disclosed in DE910515 appeared to be different with the present invention, which comprises a frustoconically shaped applicator having one larger end and one smaller end being opposite to the one larger end. Moreover, the roller of DE910515 must have a bushing on each of the two ends of the stem to prevent paint contained in the roller from leaking out. The present invention employs only one coupling portion that is fixedly disposed on the smaller cross section end and rotates therewith so that there is no paint leakage problem.

BE 542335 discloses a paint roller having a part circular profile surface that is concave. The roller does not appear to have either a paint reservoir or paint absorbent surface on the roller surface. BE542335 does not appear to address the problem of painting surfaces in the corner areas with a paint roller, which is the main objective of the present invention.

Rejection to Claims 1, 5-7, and 10-11 under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Pratt (US 2,836,840) in view of Leland (US 3,099,034)

The examiner rejects claims 1, 5-7, and 10-11 under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Pratt (US 2,836,840) in view of Leland (US 3,099,034). The examiner stated that Pratt discloses a paint roller comprised of

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a frustoconically shaped applicator 1 having a larger end and a smaller end opposite the larger end, a coupling portion 2 disposed at the smaller end, an external surface between the two ends, wherein the applicator is rotatable at the coupling portion about a rotary axis and wherein the smaller end has a planar cross section than the larger end and an external handling means 4 received by and extending outwardly from the coupling portion whereby the applicator is controlled by the smaller end.

The examiner is of the opinion that although the Pratt device does not disclose an internal chamber for storing paint or a paint absorbable member mounted on the external surface, it is obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to combine Pratt with Leland (US 3,099,034). The examiner stated that Leland discloses another paint roller wherein an internal chamber 22 having paint permeable portion, a closable inlet at one of the opposite ends (closed by element 34) and a paint absorbable member are employed in order to enable a user to paint a surface without having to employ a paint tray in order to load the roller with paint.

In regard to claim 10, the examiner stated that the coupling portion 2 is disposed centrally relative to the planar cross-section of the coupling end.

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In regard to claim 11, the examiner viewed that an abutment member is mountable to one of the opposite ends.

Applicant respectfully traversed the rejections for the following reasons.

The present invention discloses a paint roller for which its use allows contact with an adjacent surface by a paint-absorbable member of the paint roller to be avoided, or at least alleviated, without the use of any barrier or guard. The present invention comprises a frustoconically-shaped applicator having one larger end and one smaller end, with at least one abutment member mountable to one of the opposite ends. The abutment member serves to alleviate contact of the paint-absorbable member with the adjacent surfaces that are not being painted. See, 7th paragraph of Detailed Description of the Drawings. This is different with the guide member of Pratt as explained below.

Pratt discloses a guide member 6, which is fixedly connected to end of shaft 2 near base of the roller and is offset at a slight angle from the base 7 of the roller. The guide 6 is semi-circular in shape and is flattened off at bottom edge 8' along a chord parallel to the diameter of the guide (see, column 2 lines 4-8). The guide 6 is intended to perform the function of locating the roller edge directly along the line joining two 90° surfaces. The guide 6 allows the operator

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to move the roller along with a slight downward pressure on the surface being painted and a slight forward pressure against the guide. Hence, it is evident that the guide member 6 of Pratt serves different purpose with the abutment member claimed in amended claim 1.

In addition, such configuration of guide member or referred to as abutment by the examiner, only works well for Pratt device which does not have an internal chamber for storing paint with at least one closable inlet disposed at one of the opposite ends. However, it is not suitable for the present invention, as the abutment like guide member 6 of Pratt device is permanently connected to the shaft 2. The present invention comprises frustoconically shaped applicator with at least one closable inlet leading to an internal chamber. The closable inlet is disposed at one of the opposite ends and is not connected to the shaft or external handling means. The abutment member 76 of the present invention is mounted to one of the opposite ends without any connection to the shaft or external handling means.

Moreover, Pratt discloses that a cloth tape 14 is preferably bound around the base of the roller to prevent any tufts from extending outwardly from the roller base which might come in contact with, and paint surface 12 (see, column 2 lines 16-19). The configuration of the abutment of the present invention does

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not require a cloth tape or any additional guard or barrier to reduce the likelihood of contact with an adjacent surface having wet paint.

In the case for the Leland reference, although it discloses a paint roller wherein an internal chamber having paint permeable portion, a closable inlet at the opposite ends, and a paint absorbable member, the paint roller itself is not frustoconically shaped. Leland paint roller has a cylindrical shape with the same diameter on both sides. Leland also discloses that the internal chamber 22 is closed by engaging the annular cover member 34 on the shaft 20 and the cover member 34 is secured by means of the wing nut 37 (see, column 2 lines 67-69). When the nut 37 is tightened, the roller is sealed at the bearing bosses 25 and 35 by the sealing bushings 27 and 38, which provide a substantially liquid-tight seal (see, column 3 lines 6-9). The cover member has to be removed when the device is to be refilled (see, column 3 lines 20-21). This is different with the closable inlet 74 of the present invention. Paint is poured into the chamber 72 via the closable inlet 74 and the chamber is then capped using the cover 84, without the use of wing nuts. See, 12th paragraph of Detailed Description of the Drawings. The paint roller of the present invention is easily refillable by making use of simple and releasable cover to cap the chamber.

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There is no need for the use of wing nuts to prevent any leakage of fluid from the chamber.

Hence, it would not have been obvious to combine Pratt and Leland for one of ordinary skill in the art, in order to arrive at the present invention. The cited prior arts fail to teach or suggest all of the claimed features in claims 1, 5-7, and 10.

Therefore applicants respectfully submit that Claims 1, 5-7, and 10 not be unpatentable in view of the cited prior arts. Applicant respectfully requests that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case.

Respectfully submitted,

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